121
*249 ditions and of paternalism. Here, the privately owned plantation is also still an important element.

In the community on which the present study focuses, there is a modern sugar factory or usina, but control by the factory of the entire process, from cane planting and harvesting to milling, is far from complete. Although the factory, in this case a family corporation, has bought up six neighboring plantations, at least half its supply of sugar cane comes from individual, family-owned plantations. Owners of these plantations, which have conserved their original boundaries, are often descendants of the aristocratic landholders of the past, and many of their workers are descendants of slaves who lived on the same plantations.

121 In this community, changes in sugar-producing technology
178 have not reached down into the actual cane cultivation on the
*249 plantations. Emphasis has been on the improvement of milling techniques, the further refinement of sugar-cane juice, and the perfection of the finished product by the central mill. But the agricultural methods--planting, cultivation, harvesting, and transportation--have remained relatively unchanged.

121 Most important of all, with the retention of these older tech-
178 niques has gone the retention to a very great degree of the old
*249 accompanying social system. The present social system tends
571 to follow the old, traditional, family-oriented, slaveholding complex. The pattern of face-to-face interpersonal relations, developed during centuries of sugar-cane monoculture based on slavery, persists in a modified form. Although the relations between workers and owner on these family plantations are now those of employee and employer, and not slave and owner, there is still the highly personal, intimate relationship based upon mutual rights and obligations and a sense of the obligations of nobility. Even the usina system perpetuates this paternalism to a high degree.

121 The present work is a "community study" in the full sense of the term as it is understood today in social anthropology. It is primarily a descriptive analysis of one community in the sugar-producing region of northeastern Brazil, but it is conceived within the framework of the historical sequence outlined above.

175 located in a position where it could grind the cane of many
178 plantations. The two aspects of the sugar industry, the agri-
*249 cultural and the industrial, were to be separated. The cane was to be planted, cultivated, and harvested by one group of people; these were the former plantation masters, who under the new system became simply suppliers of sugar cane (fornecedores de cana) to the mill. The cane was then milled,
• [473] processed, and marketed by another group of people, a corporate body which became personified as the usineiro.

175 However, this division did not last long, for the modern up-
*249 to-date machinery of the new factories proved capable of
473 grinding more cane than the planters were supplying. Because
433 of their poor financial conditions and loss of laborers due to the abolition of slavery and the consequent resettlement of the former slaves, the planters were not able to expand their sugar-cane production enough to meet the demands of the factories. In other cases the planters resented the new factories and simply refused to cooperate, continuing to operate their outmoded mills in spite of adverse conditions. As a result, the corporations began buying plantations of their own, situated as near their mills as possible, in order to assure themselves of a larger supply of cane, and to lessen their dependence upon the individual planters.

175 There was an epoch when the hunger for land seemed insa-
*249 tiable. The usineiros not only had funds at their disposal which
425 could be used for the purchase of land, but also had the means
473 of forcing individual planters to sell their land to the corporation. By refusing to mill the cane of the planter, or by taking his cane and then letting it sour, and by various other methods, the usineiros were able to force many planters into bankruptcy, after which the corporation bought the land. Also, many planters who continued to depend upon their own efforts, producing sugar in their old-style mills, gradually went into bankruptcy, since they could not compete with the improved product of the new factories.

175 In effect the factory system in Vila Recôncavo is an enlarged
* 249 agricultural-industrial combination, an engenho enlarged many
473 times over. The ownership pattern has changed; whereas the engenho was owned by a family, and therefore subject to transfer on the death of the owner, the usina is a corporation, which continues despite the death of stockholders. As will be shown
[178] later, however, the corporation may even be a family. The plantation master, owner of lands and of slaves and ruler of

small empires, disappeared. But in his place an even more powerful figure appeared, the usineiro, the land-factory combination director and representative of corporate power. 175 249* 473

However, not all private plantations succumbed to pressure from the factories or to economic collapse. There are many which still continue to plant and cultivate sugar cane and send it to the factory for milling. After 1933 the Institute of Sugar and Alcohol prescribed the amount of sugar cane each plantation, whether private or corporate, could produce, and indicated the total amount of sugar each factory could produce and how much cane it had to accept from each plantation. As a result of this protection, many private plantations continue to function in equilibrium with the factory to which they send their sugar cane. The private plantation owners also have a separate association which looks after their interests. [178] 175 249* 433 [656]

Thus the twentieth century has seen the introduction and development of the factory system and in its wake a series of fundamental changes. The growth of factory towns (the usina nuclei) has created further competition for the older county seats, such as the town of Vila Recôncavo, and further disintegration of the former community structure. 175 249* 178

Since its discovery and settlement, the rural area of Vila Recôncavo has been the scene of sugar-cane planting and sugar making. The rural area was settled before the town of Vila Recôncavo, and the plantation nuclei were actually self-sufficient small towns in themselves. The landowning pattern in this rural area has gone full cycle. First were the large land grants which were then split up into separate engenhos (after 1889 known as fazendas) through division due to inheritance, sale, or donation. For about three hundred years the pattern of the area was that of the engenho. However, at the end of the nineteenth century, this way of life came to an end as a result of financial crises and the abolition of slavery. The twentieth century has seen the introduction of the factory, which has led to a concentration of lands again under single ownership, although this time corporate and not that of a single individual or family. 175 178 249* 423

During the epoch of the plantations there was a necessity for the existence of the town to serve the needs of the landowning class. The community during this time was focused to a large extent toward the county seat. But with the abolition of slavery, the disappearance of the plantation master and his large family, and the coming of the factory, the former com- 175 178 249* 621

2t Hutchinson E-4,5 (1950-1951) 1957 SO11 Bahia Brazilians SO11

VILA RECÔNCAVO

[The Private Plantation]

*249 829 178 [434] The entire harvest is done with great sacrifice, my head wearied by accounts; 6,000 tons of cane, over Cr$600.000,00--a lot of money, enough for all the expenses, and still some left over. What a mistake! The general costs, the extraordinary costs, house repairs, etc., will take it all. So we start again--new plantings, larger fields, all for more money. But we lack the courage to stop planting sugar cane and plant corn or coffee, anything else. We were born hearing of senhores de engenho, of trays and trays of silver service, of Negro slaves, of everything which has disappeared into the past. But it still burns in our blood, and deep down we want to have lands, to order and be obeyed. We like the humble and servile vassalage of the Negro, which makes us feel important, the dispensers of favors.

*249 829

I think of this as old Saturno goes along, step by step. There is Paulos Santos coming along the road, with his little burro and two baskets, going to get manioc for the ever-present farinha. "Good morning, Patron!" What affection I feel for each one of them! Pedro Manuel with so many little children; Zé Julião with his sick wife, Conceição with his air of secular servility. But affection resolves nothing! Money and action do! I could knock down those miserable hovels and make good hygienic houses.

Once home I fall into the hammock, reading Proust and forgetting everything.

The Usina: Usina São Pedro

*249 •473 The Sociedad Anonima, the corporation which operates this factory, represents the new pattern in the Recôncavo. There are now nine factories functioning in the Recôncavo, for the trend has been to close the small ones which could not function economically. Five of the nine belong to one corporation, which holds extensive lands and receives the cane of many suppliers. We will describe the smallest of the four independent factories, which has a rated capacity of seventy-two thousand sacks of sugar as compared with the two hundred thousand of one of the larger mills (a sack equaling 60 kilograms). The legal capacity of the Usina São Pedro--which it has never reached--is fifty-two thousand sacks, as determined by the Institute of Sugar and Alcohol. At the present time, however,

*249 433 [128] [656]

VILA RECONCAVO

[The Usina]

the factory is undergoing a reformation which will raise its capacity to over one hundred thousand sacks, and the legal capacity will be readjusted.

Usina São Pedro, although the smallest, is representative of the others and experiences the same problems and difficulties. It differs from some in that it is a family enterprise. The stockholders are nearly all members of the Conde family, and the operations are directed by two members of the family. The factory itself was one of the three built by the state government in 1900 on land controlled by the Navy,[5] on the edge of the Bay, which provides excellent year-round transportation facilities. The mill was acquired in 1909 by the Conde family with two plantations, to which the family has since added four other contiguous plantations. The corporation has a total area of slightly over four thousand acres, mostly of rich massapê soil. The factory receives cane from the plantation of Dona Sinhá, who is also a member of the Conde family by birth and by marriage. It also gets cane from four other plantations within the community and four outside the community, which send their cane by the traditional sailboat. In addition, the factory owns a 2,324-acre plantation in the county of Purificação which is used for grazing and raising cattle and for supplying wood for the factory fires. There is direct water transportation between the factory and the plantation in Purificação.

The designation usina has several meanings which are quite similar to the meanings of the older term, engenho. In its larger context, usina means the entire land-factory combination, including the mill and all the plantations belonging to the corporation. More specifically, usina means the factory building itself. In another context, usina simply indicates the population nucleus, including the factory, the owner's house, and the other buildings.

The usina or factory nucleus roughly follows the same settlement pattern of the old plantations. The point of orientation is the factory building, near which stand the chalet and other homes of the owning family, which are grouped together in a park of royal palms and mango trees. Usually a small chapel or oratory is included in one wing of the chalet, where

5. The shoreline bordering salt water is controlled to the depth of 33 meters by the Brazilian Navy.

2: Hutchinson E-4, 5 (1950-1951) 1957 8011 Bahia Brazilians 8011
VILA RECÔNCAVO

* 249 46 184

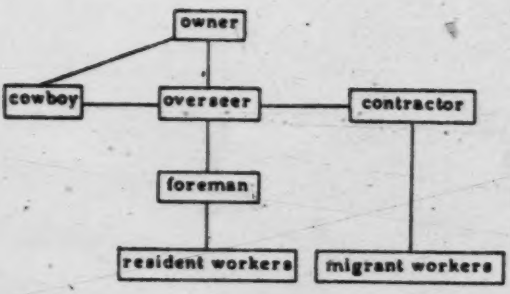

Fig. 1. Hierarchical diagram of the private plantation (Fazenda das Moças)

* 249 473 46 184

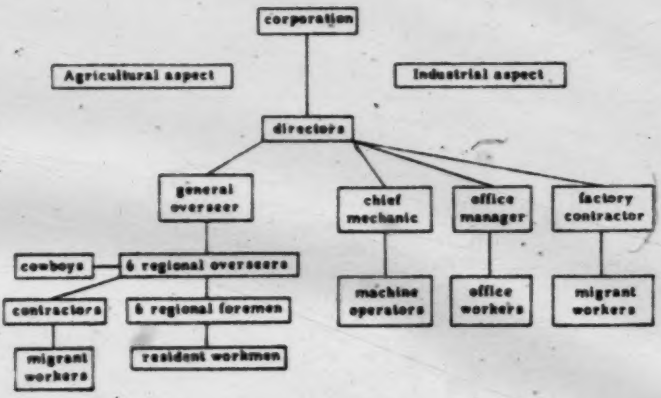

Fig. 2. Hierarchical diagram of the usina system (Usina São Pedro)

2: Hutchinson E-4, 5 (1950-1951) 1957 SO11 Bahia Brazilians SO11
VILA RECÔNCAVO

[Class A Families]

[Class B Families]

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such families also usually had fairly extensive accumulations of silver service, china and crystal, and linens. It was the custom for such possessions to be distributed among the heirs as separate items. One son would receive a plantation in the Recôncavo, another a ranch in the sertão; a daughter might receive a full and valuable set of table service, or perhaps a whole house and its furnishings in Salvador. Single plantations were almost never divided, unless they were large enough to make such a division practicable. Property divisions were often made rather arbitrarily by the family patriarch, and were often bitterly disputed by the heirs after his death. Slaves were also part of the property divided, although it was not infrequent that certain favorite slaves were freed at such a time. In other cases, the favorite slave of a son or daughter would be willed to him by the father. Through inheritances and constant divisions, the former large holdings of these aristocratic families came to be well broken up.

Today in the event of a death in a family, there is often only one plantation in which the heirs may share. However, the plantation is rarely divided. In some cases where there is no strong emotional tie to the plantation, the heirs may sell it outright and share the proceeds. Another solution has been to rent the plantation to a factory and thereby delay the final solution. Still another has been for one of the heirs to take over the management of the plantation, paying a rental fee to the other heirs. A final solution is often reached by allowing one of the heirs to purchase the plantation from his coinheritors, and in this way the plantation and its traditions remain in the family, and are to some extent shared by all members of the extended family.

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The problem of land disposal exists only for the private plantation. In the case of factory lands, ownership is corporate. Death of the holder of shares in the corporation does not affect the land tenure, which goes on as before. His shares in the corporation are simply distributed among his heirs.

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The family pattern in Class B is quite different from that which has just been described. Although the conjugal family is equally small and shows the same trend toward diminution, there is never the extent or strength of the extended family which exists in Class A. In Vila Recôncavo, with only one exception, Class B families are only conjugal units without local tradition of generations in the area, for either they are couples who have recently come to the town in governmental

2: Hutchinson E-4, 6 (1980-1981) 1987 8011 Bahia Brazilians 8011
VILA RECÔNCAVO

9. *Recent Changes in Vila Recôncavo*

THE FIELD WORK described in Chapters 1 through 8 of this study was carried out from June, 1950, to June, 1951. In 1955 and 1956 the author had the opportunity to do further work in Vila Recôncavo. This chapter is a summary of some of the changes which have occurred during the five-year period from 1951 to 1956.

First, the sugar industry has undergone several changes, developing still further from the plantation (engenho) toward the highly industrialized factory (usina) as postulated in the introduction. The factory-plantation system, as distinct from the private plantations, has experienced the most change.

Usina São Pedro was described earlier as a family corporation, owned and directed by members of one extended family. At one time in the past five years, this family was obliged to take into the corporation a large amount of capital representing a second family enterprise, considerably larger in scope than that of the first. Within a short period the second family achieved complete control of the factory through a series of financial manipulations. As a result, Usina São Pedro passed from the Conde family's ownership and direction, and is now just one element of a large commercial firm.

For a more complete understanding of Bahian society it is necessary that we examine this second family corporation. The key word is "family," which represents almost a constant in this culture. The second family, the Helvetians, is a second generation immigrant family. The major activities of the family corporation--there are other stockholders, especially employees, with small holdings--have always been commercial: exporting, importing, distributing, and transporting. The cor-

2t Hutchinson E-4,5 (1950-1951) 1957 SO11 Bahia Brazilians SO11
VILA RECÔNCAVO

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•473 poration has extensive landholdings in other parts of the state,
*249 but they are exploited on an impersonal, profit basis, not on
*[565] the traditional, paternalistic basis common in the sugar area.
The Helvetians have taken a place in the upper ranks of Bahian society, representing new money and economic power. Their history is important. The original immigrant married into a Bahian family of "good name," and all of his sons have done the same. One of them married a daughter of the Coronel, founder of Usina São Pedro. It was through this marriage that the transfer of the factory was channeled. Today, although the Condes still own stock in the corporation, the Helvetians have the controlling interest, and the Condes are gradually selling their shares to the Helvetians.

466 The new corporation has brought about many changes in ad-
178 ministration of the factory. Although still a family corporation,
*249 it has become, from the wider, community, point of view, a
473 strictly business enterprise with no family ties and no face-
to-face personal relations. A new directorship and manage-
[596] ment was established. The new "boss" of the factory is a man
[571] from a different part of the state, and his background is entirely different from that of sugar-cane growers. The thread of "family" is still unbroken, for the new manager is related to the new owning family by marriage. He is treated, however, as a paid employee of the corporation. His brother, now general administrator of the agricultural part of the factory-in-the-field, is treated similarly.

These two new managers have put the relations between management and labor on a strictly business basis and have removed all elements of paternalism. Upon taking over, they dismissed most of the older, higher-level factory, field, and office workers. Administrators, mechanics, and bookkeepers, most of whom had seen twenty years or more of service, were dispatched. New people came to take their places, and some of the vacancies were filled by promotions. Time clocks were installed, and the system of authority was reinforced all the way down the line. Social legislation--a new factor in rural, agricultural Brazil--was invoked to take the place of paternalism.

178 Thus the old, paternalistic, personal, owner-director pat-
*249 tern has changed completely. The chalet is no longer the scene of family gatherings for summer vacations, for Carnaval, or for Christmas; even the traditional Botada has undergone a

2t Hutchinson E-4,5 (1950-1951) 1957 SO11 Bahia Brazilians SO11

VILA RECÔNCAVO

Politically, this influx of new workers has had little influence. Local politics, at least, remain in the hands of the traditional landowners. However, national political parties other than that of the landowners are gaining force, especially the labor party, and within the near future there will undoubtedly be considerable modification in the voting patterns. The bulk of the rural population do not have the franchise because of their illiteracy. On the other hand, the petroleum workers, whose level of living is considerably higher than that of the rural population, have the franchise and according to law must exercise it.

A major area of change in the community is the class structure. In its main outlines the class structure remains the same, but there are some differences in emphasis. Class A, the rural upper class, which also is part of the upper class in the capital city where it resides part of the year, has been somewhat depleted. The Coronel and his son and son-in-law and their families, who constituted the family owner-directors of Usina São Pedro, are no longer part of the scene. As a result of the shift in ownership and direction the former usineiro has been replaced by paid employees.[1] Although these employees are related to the principal members of the new owning firm by marriage, they are treated as employees rather than as family members. They do not have the "social standing," meaning tradition, background, extended family relations, and the scholarly training, which distinguish the former owners. Class A therefore is now represented only by the private plantation owners.

On the other hand, Class B is slowly becoming larger in both the rural and the urban areas of the community, as a result of the addition of two new groups: the members of the new factory organization, and the petroleum workers with their much higher standard of living, considerably higher education, and their steady employment as members of a new bureaucracy, Petrobrás. Unmarried workers belonging to Petrobrás are to some extent seeking marital alliances with girls of the area, especially from the factory nucleus and from the town of Vila Recôncavo. In some cases legal and religious marriages have taken place. In other cases the couple has simply

1. The term usineiro is usually limited to the owner-director who is the founder of the factory, or is the son of the founder. When the director is a paid employee, he is just "the boss."

from the competition of other sugar-producing areas. Abolition was the factor which, in many cases, simply ended a struggle several decades old.

The overall production of sugar in the Recôncavo was already dropping noticeably at the time of abolition, and it continued to decrease afterwards. At the end of the last century, state-supported *usinas*, or large mechanical factories for milling sugar cane, were opened in an effort to stimulate sugar production. At the same time, various other *usinas* were opened by private capital. These central mills received and processed the sugar cane of many plantations. The *usina* had the advantage of freeing the planter from the worries of milling and marketing the sugar, allowing him to concentrate on higher production of sugar cane, while the mechanized *usina* was able to produce more sugar out of the cane, thus increasing production. This system of sugar production proved relatively lucrative, and the government *usinas* passed into private hands. The owners of *usinas* bought as many neighbouring plantations as possible, and in this way the *usineiros*, as they were called, became at the same time the mill owners and sugar-cane planters—employers of factory workers and of agricultural workers. The plantations which did not pass into the hands of an *usina* became *fornecedores*, supplying cane to one or another large sugar mill.

The *usina* system, however, in many respects did little to change the traditional plantation system. The plantations belonging to *usineiros* continue as separate units; each generally had an administrator, a man responsible to the *usineiro*, who is in charge of the plantation. As a rule the administrator, who is an employee of the *usina*, lives in the old *sobrado*, the former residence of the *senhor do engenho*, as the old plantation owners were known. The workers on the plantations and their families frequently still live in *senzala*-like houses, usually a long narrow building under one roof divided into separate apartments of two or three rooms. Despite many changes of technology, many examples of the old and the new exist side by side on these Recôncavo plantations. On the same plantation both mechanical tractor and ox traction may be used to pull plows. There are workers' houses side by side, one with electricity and a radio, and another using candles and kerosene lamps. Furthermore, the hierarchy of workers and specialists in sugar-cane raising persists little modified from the early nineteenth century. There are the field hands, the ox-cart drivers, the artisans and other specialists. The plantation is also approximately the same size as it was in the early nineteenth century (although several may be the property of one company nowadays) and it has about the same number of hired workers as it had slaves before.

But the *usina* system and other outside influences have made for many fundamental changes in the Recôncavo. In the very large

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[241] sugar workers move rarely, remaining for generations on the same plantation. Each family has its garden where a little maize, beans
[465] and manioc are grown. Pay day comes every two weeks, when as a rule the worker goes to the owner's house to receive his money.
[461] The pay is small, 15 to 25 dollars a fortnight, depending on how much the man has worked during the period. Men do not like to work more than five to six hours a day, from six a.m. to twelve noon, and seldom work more than five days a week. They work easily, without hurry. In the afternoon they work in their garden, if their
249 wives have not already done so. On the plantation no one starves;
466 everyone has his *patrão* (protector) in the person of the owner, and in case of an emergency, accident or sickness, he expects help from him. This personal element is very important on most plantations in the vicinity of Vila Recôncavo; as a rule, the owner knows all the workers by name, knows their families and their family troubles and
[164] problems. He is aware of their love affairs and up-to-date on the health of new-born children and their mothers. Nearly all cases of sickness, from common colds and rheumatism to more serious ailments, are brought directly to the attention of the *patrão* or his wife. The owner, returning from a prolonged stay in the city, receives visits from the workers or from their wives, during which all the personal gossip is exchanged. The workers inquire about the owner's family and more extended family, for they generally know them all. Engagements, weddings, births, deaths and illnesses are reported on both sides. Complaints or requests are also made to the owner. The relationship is highly personal, intimate, gentle and frank.

466 On one rather small *usina*, which will be called São Pedro, in the
249 rural zone of Vila Recôncavo, the situation is somewhat different.
472 São Pedro is not one of the large *usinas* of the Recôncavo, owned by a corporation; it is relatively small and owned by one of the most
[473] important families of the Vila Recôncavo community, members of the regional aristocracy whose family has held plantations there for many generations. Because the owners of the *usina* actually administrate it, and since they are in residence in the locality at least part of the year, they are able to maintain many of the traditional personal relations with their employees, many of whom have worked
[162] on the plantations belonging to their family and in the *usina* for most of their lives. But there is a total of 1,183 workers and their families at the *usina* and on the plantations belonging to São Pedro, and the very size of the enterprise and the number of workers make for a more impersonal and more strictly economic relationship between employer and employee. Workers become more a name on a payroll, and the employer a person with whom one seldom has direct contact. In the larger *usinas* of the Recôncavo this trend is even more marked especially where the employer is a large corporation with offices in Salvador.